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YOUR CHILD'S TEETH

Cooperative Extension Service
University of Illinois
at Urbana-Champaign

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All children **should** have a chance for healthy teeth.

But some parents do **not** give them this chance for . . .

GOOD DENTAL HEALTH

Is your child able to open the door to DENTAL HEALTH?

It takes three keys!



These keys help stop tooth decay (rotting) and other dental problems.

But children must open the door to dental health when they are very young . . . even when they have their "baby teeth."

Most youngsters have all 20 "baby teeth" by 2½ years of age.

Some people say, "Why worry about baby teeth? They fall out anyway!"

It is **WRONG** to think that way!

Baby teeth have many important jobs. These include:

- holding spaces for adult teeth.
- helping adult teeth come in straight.
- chewing food.
- helping children speak clearly.

Baby teeth that are not cared for will decay and may have to be pulled.

But this does not have to happen!

The way to stop it is to give **your** child the keys to **GOOD DENTAL HEALTH**.



Children Need

- vegetables and fruits
(4 or more servings a day)
- breads and cereals
(4 or more servings a day)
- milk and dairy products
(3 or more servings a day)
- meat and other proteins
(2 or more servings a day)

Children do NOT need lots of sweets.

- Candy, soda pop, cookies and other sweet foods help cause tooth decay.
- Chewy, sugary foods like some candies stick to the teeth and are hard to get off.
- The longer foods stay on teeth, the more chance they will cause harm.
- Instead of sugary snacks, give your child fresh vegetables, fruits and other good foods.

2 Clean Teeth

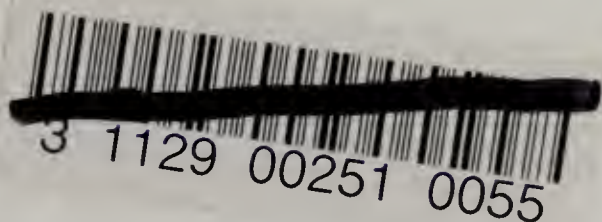
By the time most children are one year old, they have 10 baby teeth. This is the time when tooth brushing should start.

Brushing Tips

- You will have to do the brushing until your child can do it alone.
- Use a small brush (soft bristles) specially made for a child's small mouth.
- Brush after each meal and snack. If this is not possible, rinse the mouth with water.
- Use toothpaste that has fluoride in it.
- Brushing should remove all food on and between teeth.

Be sure to ask your dentist about the **best** way to brush teeth.

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3 Visits To the Dentist

Children should see their dentist at least once a year, but twice a year is even better.

Plan your child's first dental exam at about 2 years of age.

Do not wait until there is a tooth problem before doing this.

How can dentists help?

They can find and fix tooth problems before they become severe.

Regular visits save money and keep teeth healthy.

Dentists will tell you about other ways to keep teeth strong.

Check with your local health department or Public Aid office if regular dental care costs more than you can afford. They may know how you can get this care at lower cost.

MAKE SURE YOUR CHILD ENJOYS GOOD DENTAL HEALTH!





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